

# House of Commons Debates.

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FOURTH SESSION—EIGHTH PARLIAMENT.

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## SPEECH

OF

N. A. BELCOURT, M.P.

ON THE

MONTRÉAL, OTTAWA AND GEORGIAN BAY CANAL

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OTTAWA, MONDAY, 12TH JUNE, 1899

Mr. N. A. BELCOURT (Ottawa). Mr. Speaker, when the question of the construction of the Georgian Bay Canal was under the consideration of the House last session, it was my privilege to offer some remarks on the subject and I did so, I confess, with some enthusiasm. I desire to assure the House, however, that I shall to-night, as I did then, endeavour to treat the project in a serious and sober manner, and if I indulge in a little enthusiasm on the subject, it is because I feel very deeply and very sincerely the great advantages and the immense importance of this undertaking. I can at once assure the House that any statement which I shall make I shall support with authority; and I venture the opinion that when hon. gentlemen compare my statements with the opinions which I shall quote, they will admit that my enthusiasm, if any of it is displayed to-night, will have ample justification. With my hon. friend from Pontiac (Mr. Poupart) I entirely agree, that this is not a question of party politics, that it never has been such, and that it ought not to be such. The question is too important, too far-reaching in its consequences, to be circumscribed by the limits of party politics. I hope it never will be so circumscribed, but that in discussing it we shall always rise above party interests. Like my hon. friend the hon. member for Pontiac, I have no personal motive in this matter.

My motives are purely patriotic. I have no other incentive than a desire to do my duty towards my constituents in particular, and towards what I consider to be the best interests of the whole Ottawa valley.

When the matter was up the last time, I was proceeding to lay before the House the advantages, agricultural, industrial and commercial which, to my mind, this project offers. Referring to the first aspect of the question to which I had begun to address my remarks, I desire to say a word or two in addition. With reference to the agricultural features of the scheme, I want to remind the House that it will help in the colonization of fertile lands as large as the whole of the New England States, and as large as one-half of the whole British Isles. This waterway traverses immense valleys, which surround Lake Temiscamingue and Lake Nipissing and the district of Algoma. These districts are tributary to the Ottawa waterway, and there are in that section, I am told, 2,000,000 acres of fertile lands. These lands are sold to-day for 50 cents per acre. I submit to the House, as a reasonable proposition, that if this waterway were constructed and in operation, these lands would increase at least ten times in value, and would be readily taken up, because they are fertile lands. Those who had an opportunity of visiting that district lately no doubt witnessed the immense developments which have

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taken place. Wheat which was not grown there until a few years ago, is now being largely harvested. It seems to me that if the construction of the Georgian Bay Canal had no other object than the opening up of these vast lands in the interior, and the bringing about of their immediate settlement, this alone would warrant the expenditure in view.

I want to refer for a moment to the industrial advantages which the construction of the Georgian Bay Canal would bring about. It would, to my mind, at once give the greatest impetus to the lumbering and mineral industries of that vast region. There are, as every one knows, millions of cords of pulp-wood in the vicinity of the Ottawa valley. The Sturgeon Falls district has already produced a very large quantity of this article, which has become the subject of, perhaps, the greatest industry in Canada at the present time. At the head of Lake Temiscamingue, I am told, there is a practically inexhaustible supply of pulp-wood; and experienced men who have gone into the subject assure me that if a waterway were constructed there would be a saving of from \$1 to \$2 on every cord of pulp-wood coming down this waterway. I have no doubt that it would lead to the establishment of flour mills, pulp mills, rolling mills and smelters, and that cities and towns would spring up along its course.

The mining development which would follow its construction would be almost as large and encouraging. We all know that the Ottawa valley is rich in all sorts of minerals--iron, nickel, copper, galena, lead, zinc, mica and phosphates, as well as marbles, and other building materials. Quite recently, too, gold-bearing quartz in large quantities has been discovered close to the banks of the Ottawa River, within 15 or 20 miles of the city of Ottawa, and several mines are now being developed and put into operation. With reference to the mining industry, I want to remind the House of a fact, which is well established on the other side of the line, that is, that water transportation alone has made possible the iron developments of Michigan, Wisconsin and Lake Superior. When we remember that the lumbering and mining industries constitute most of the wealth of the Ottawa valley, and when we remember that 75 per cent of the marvellous traffic of the great lakes and the interior of this continent, depends upon the lumbering and mining industries, we shall at once see the tremendous advantages which this waterway would afford to those two industries.

With reference to the electrical development to which some reference has been made I would ask your permission, Mr. Speaker, to refer to the opinions of experts on this subject, which will show clearly the tremendous advantages which industries in general would derive from the development of electrical power along this waterway. I want to give you first the opinion of Mr. T. C. Clarke, the

eminent engineer, who, referring to the water powers of the Ottawa, and the benefits to be derived therefrom, in a report made in February, 1898, expressed himself as follows:—

The dams designed by me \* \* \* absolutely necessary to give sufficient depth for navigation, will also be the means of developing and controlling water-power for electrical appliances. I can state unreservedly that I know of no other place in any manufacturing country—Niagara Falls not excepted—where there is such an amount of water-power as this scheme can make available, both for manufacturing purposes and possibly for moving vessels rapidly through the locks. \* \* \* Adding that available on the Mattawa and French rivers, there will probably be, at a minimum, not less than 700,000 horse-power. The average discharge of the rivers would give not less than four times this amount. All this can be made available by the comparatively small expenditure necessary for flumes and the foundations of penstocks and turbines.

Mr. Walter Shanly, whose opinion I quote with a great deal of confidence in a matter of this kind, says :

Its water-power is not only unlimited in capacity, but available to its full extent at numberless stages along the route. By the opening of the projected navigation this great manufacturing agent would be brought into comparative proximity to the granaries of Lake Michigan, and would immediately be turned to account in preparing the cereals of the west for the markets of the east. With such a combination of advantages in possession or prospect it is surely not difficult of belief that the valley of the Ottawa is destined to be not only the workshop of Canada, but one of the chief manufacturing districts of America

Mr. Higman, who is an authority on electricity, has also given us an estimate of the value of this water power. The figures are very large, and I shall not weary the House with them; but refer the House to what Mr. Higman has said on the subject.

Then, I come to the commercial feature of the undertaking, which is the most important one, because it includes all the others. In fact, the others are mere accessories to it. We know that cheap transportation is the great commercial question of this continent—admittedly the question of all questions. To get to the seaboard the traffic and the produce of the interior is a question which for many years has engaged the most serious attention of economists and men of business and finance throughout this continent. It is a question upon which depends the ultimate commercial supremacy of the two nations that inhabit the North American continent. I venture the opinion that the growth and enrichment of Canada will follow the solving of that problem. A single glance at the map ought to convince everybody that this Georgian Bay route is the quickest and cheapest from the interior to the seaboard. I shall not trouble the House with the figures adduced on a former occasion, giving comparisons of distances from different

places, but shall content myself with reminding the House that this route, when constructed, will be from Duluth or Chicago, 900 miles shorter to Liverpool than by way of New York. If it is the shortest and most direct, it must in time, if not at once, become the cheapest, and then the problem of cheap transportation from the interior to the seaboard will be solved. I believe that when this canal is constructed, it will offer the cheapest route from Duluth, Chicago or Port Arthur to Montreal, and thence to the ocean. I have before me the figures given by Mr. Clarke himself as to the cost of transportation from the points I have mentioned to Montreal, and I wish to refer the House to his report, made in June, 1898, on the subject. The result of his figures is that when this route is constructed the grain which now costs from 5 to 6 cents on board ship in the port of New York, will be transported from Duluth, Chicago or Port Arthur to the city of Montreal for  $\frac{1}{2}$  to  $\frac{3}{4}$  cents, thus reducing the cost of transportation one-half. In 1898 nearly 250,000,000 bushels of wheat reached the city of Buffalo, and only 35,000,000 reached the city of Montreal. We naturally ask ourselves why that is the case. Well, two reasons are given. One is the want of harbour facilities in Montreal. No doubt, that has been a very potent factor in depriving Canada of the trade to which it is entitled, but that difficulty is now in a fair way of being removed. The Government has entered upon, and intends to prosecute with all diligence, the thorough equipment of the harbour of Montreal with all necessary modern facilities. The other reasons given is the great influences of the cities of Buffalo and New York. But I submit that when Canada affords the great lakes a cheaper way, the cheapest on this continent, for transporting grain to an ocean port, the influences of these cities will soon disappear. This is not a question of sentiment, but of dollars. It is a question of commerce. Whether the ships sailing on the great lakes fly the American or the British flag, they will seek the cheapest and the shortest route, and that route is the Ottawa River to Montreal. One of the great objections urged against the Georgian Bay Canal is that it would compete with the St. Lawrence canals. I do not think so. A great many experts, men who know and have given the matter their best thought, assert that it will not be a competitor at all, but there is one thing which I think I am safe in saying, and that is that if the development of our North-west goes on, as we have every reason to hope it will, the St. Lawrence canals will, before very long, become utterly inadequate to handle the freight from the North-west, and that traffic will tax to their fullest capacity both the Georgian Bay Canal, when constructed, and the St. Lawrence canals.

On a former occasion I cited to you, Mr.

Speaker, the opinions of our most eminent public men in the past—Sir John Macdonald, the Hon. Alex. Mackenzie—and also the opinion of Sir William Van Horne, and many others. I also cited the opinion of Major Symons. I would like now to give the views of a few more prominent men who have delivered themselves on this subject. First of all, I want to call your attention to a very remarkable statement made long ago—remarkable not only because of the deep thought and foresight which it displayed, but because it was made so long ago, and may be called a prophecy. I wish to refer you to the opinion of Sir John Michel, who was at one time commander-in-chief of Her Majesty's forces in Canada. This is what he said, many years ago, when addressing a public meeting in Ottawa :

I believe that the ties which happily unite Great Britain and Canada will be closer drawn by the opening of this route. I believe that the commercial development which would be produced would be incalculable. I believe that America and Canada, and consequently Great Britain, will be so commercially allied by the opening of this route that the grand object of all true lovers of either of these countries would be attained, namely, the certain peaceful dispersion of every little cloud that might arise in the political horizon of North America.

Speaking of the position of the city of Montreal he added :

You are placed in a position held by no other city I know of in the world. You are placed on the only spot on a vast continent which can be made the receiving-house of one-third a continent's exterior trade, and able to despatch that third to Europe. But you are unsafely situated. The grand route to the sea by the Ottawa and French rivers should, as soon as possible, be undertaken, giving you a back-bone of military strength, and bringing to your doors the vast trade of the vaster west.

These seem prophetic words uttered so long ago—words which I trust are about to be verified.

Mr. Walter Shanly also expressed himself at one time in this way :

To those who have made the laws that govern the movements of western traffic their study I leave it to estimate the height to which Canada will be elevated in commercial importance by opening through the heart of the Dominion a continuous navigation, the shortest water communication that now does or ever can exist besides between tide-water, whether in the Gulf of St. Lawrence or in the estuary of the Hudson, and the broadest extent of grain-growing country in the world.

An American engineer, of considerable repute, said the other day considering the Georgian Bay Canal :

My conviction that the Ottawa River offers the best opportunity on the globe for a well-planned ship canal is a fixed one.

Our own press throughout Canada have almost continuously discussed this matter.

The "Trade Bulletin," in a recent issue, expressed itself in this way :

One great desideratum in our canal system will be felt until the Georgian Bay Canal is built, and all who have the best interests of the Dominion at heart should put forth every effort to further the completion of this shortest of all water routes connecting the big traffic of the Canadian and American North-west with the foot of ocean navigation at Montreal. Then, instead of doing a business of 33,000,000 bushels of grain in a season, we could easily overtop the 100,000,000 bushels mark, and eventually double it. Imagine the large increase in the number of ocean vessels which would be attracted to this port, and the additional import trade which would arise therefrom. If the present Government were wise they would raise an everlasting monument to their beneficent rule, by lending their aid in commencing the construction of the Montreal, Ottawa and Georgian Bay Canal at as early a date as possible, as it promises to be one of the greatest commercial projects on this continent.

Not only has the Canadian press given the matter its serious attention, but we find that every English paper of importance has, within a year or so, taken it up and discussed it repeatedly. I have read a great number of articles, the best of the great newspapers in England advocating the construction of this waterway. Not to weary the House, I shall content myself with quoting one opinion, which is as recent as the 20th May. I have here an article in "Black and White," a very remarkable article and one which I would ask every hon. member of the House to read. I will only read a few extracts on this occasion. "Black and White" compares the project with Cecil Rhodes's great Cape to Cairo Railway, and states that in the writer's opinion the construction of the Georgian Bay Canal is of far more Imperial importance even than that great railway, and has in it the possibility of greater commercial advantages to England. It then goes on :

The dependence upon the United States of America of all Canadian means of transportation, whether by water or by rail is immaterial, is the most prominent and most serious characteristic of the transit question in the Dominion, and one which makes the construction of any line of communication, which would be identified with the sole authority of Great Britain, of the most supreme importance, elevating the entire undertaking beyond the regions of commerce, and mere economical and ethical qualities of such an object, to a position which is in analogy with the projection and possession of a new Imperial measure for defence. The arrangement between America and Canada is not calculated to be disturbed so long as Great Britain and the United States remain upon terms of amicable indifference; but the advantages to Canada, even in time of peace, of possessing an inland waterway, immune from any international contingency, are not to be lightly appraised. Nor is such a fatality liable to happen, for the canal has already been the subject of a special commission of inquiry by the Dominion Senate, and something more definite than an interchange of opinions and views has taken place between the War Office and the Federal Government since Canada made representations upon the subject to them.

The anomalous position in which Canada is placed by the exercise with America of a joint paramountcy over the transit of Canadian commerce is owing, in no small degree, to the motives which actuated British policy to surrender Maine to America in the early history of the rise of that Republic to power. By the surrender of Maine an "all-red" line of railway between Halifax and New Westminster, between the east and west, became virtually impossible, since the Canadian Pacific is compelled to cross American territory in the most important, and at the same time most vulnerable, section of its transcontinental route. Thus does posterity reap the sins of its progenitor, and Canadians to-day are bitterly repenting this blunder of an earlier generation.

With reference more particularly to the construction of the canal, the writer goes on to say :

The completion of the canal should inaugurate an epoch of much greater prosperity throughout the Dominion, more particularly in those parts which are contiguous to the great lakes; almost two million square miles west of Chicago and Duluth will become dependent upon it. Montreal and Quebec will become distributing centres for trade and freight between the west and Europe, while the difference in time and in the rates of insurance—from which is implied the greater security of the new route—will cause an immense traffic from the grain-growing areas and cattle-raising districts of the North-west to be shipped by the "all-red" canal. Montreal and the adjacent provinces can hardly escape from the prosperity which will accrue from this augmentation in existing trade, while the splendid opportunities which Montreal and Quebec will present as depôts for the commerce of the northern states of the American continent cannot but seriously affect New York.

Such is the opinion of "Black and White." This, I believe, is a fair sample of the numerous articles that are appearing in the press of the mother country concerning the Georgian Bay Canal. My hon. friend from Pontiac (Mr. Poupore) has referred to the great number of resolutions passed by boards of trade and chambers of commerce along the route from the Georgian Bay to the city of Montreal. As representing the Capital I have much pleasure in laying before the House, as requested, the resolution passed by a mass meeting of the citizens of Ottawa, held on the 24th January, 1899, on this subject. I shall not read it, because it is very much on the lines of those that have been already read. This project is not only engaging the attention of the Canadian and English people, but it is also engaging the very serious attention of our friends across the line. Not only is it engaging their attention, but I assert with confidence—and I have a number of authorities to back up what I say—that it has aroused their envy, their jealousy and their dire fear. If time permitted, I could read to the House various statements that have appeared in their newspapers and magazines recently on this project. These would show the House at once with what fear and envy the Americans look forward to the construction of the Georgian Bay Canal. My hon. friend from Pontiac quoted

the opinion of the "Tribune." I shall now, with your permission, quote the opinion of a gentleman well known in the United States who has made a reputation for himself as a strong advocate of railways as against canals, a gentleman who does not believe in waterways but does believe in railways. In an article that appeared in the "North American Review," of February, 1898, Mr. Latcha, an authority on the subject, said :

It is not denied, but is asserted, that a ship canal, if built of the width and depth of the Baltic Canal, whether by New York State or by the St. Lawrence River, will greatly benefit portions of the North-west. But it is all-important to know what portions of the North-west would thus be benefited and what would be the result of building that canal to our nation at large. To determine this we must go to the foundation of the question at once.

You will see that this gentleman indulges the hope that Canada, including the North-west, will one day be part of the United States. I mention that to show that his opinion upon this subject must be taken as absolutely sincere.

More than one-third of that vast territory is arable,—

#### Speaking of our own North-west.

—and when thoroughly developed would produce annually from 500,000,000 to 750,000,000 bushels of wheat, while the wheat crop of the entire United States does not now average more than 500,000,000 bushels annually. The Dominion Government a few years ago expended thousands of dollars in transportation and supplies to aid settlers upon those lands. The serious decline in prices of all grains rendered it impossible for the Canadian Pacific Railway to transport the crops from that territory to market at a rate which would leave income sufficient to support the producer. The result was, the settlers who were able to leave deserted the country. With a ship canal, however, which would permit the largest ocean steamers to go to and from the west end of lake Superior,—

Of course, this is an error. The promoters of this waterway do not entertain the opinion that a ship canal of the depth mentioned here is at all necessary.

—wheat could be grown in that vast region and be marketed in Europe at prices which would utterly destroy the wheat and corn markets of the United States; for nothing can be more evident than that if the British North-west produce millions of bushels of wheat in excess of that now grown in the United States, the price of that cereal would fall, and corn would accompany it in its downward course. But that wheat will not seek Duluth for market, much less would it seek Chicago. The Canadian Pacific Railway would extend branches throughout that territory and control the carriage of the grain to water, and their water port would be Port Arthur. That grain would not seek New York city for a market, but would traverse the natural water route to Montreal, which would be the great financial centre controlling that commerce, destroying the grain export business of New York city.

When the writer was building the Duluth, South Shore and Atlantic Railway, the Dominion Government began the construction of its ship

canal around Sault Ste. Marie on its own territory. At that time, it was repeatedly stated, a principal reason for building that canal was to prepare for diverting the milling business of the North-west to the Dominion side of the Sault Ste. Marie. The vast power which could be developed at that point must be apparent. While our wheat supply comes from Dakota and Minnesota, Minneapolis can control that business. But the day a great ship canal is built from the ocean to the British North-west will see the milling interests removed to the Canadian side of the river, destroying the Minneapolis milling business just as certainly as that of Rochester was destroyed by the development of our western fields.

When the British North-west can raise and ship by canal 100,000,000 bushels of wheat, British capital will build the Georgian Bay Ship Canal, and every ton of traffic from the Lake Superior regions to the ocean will traverse British territory, leaving Detroit, Toledo, Cleveland and Buffalo hundreds of miles from the direct route to the ocean. The bulk of the traffic of the great North-west will be carried on British vessels, manned by British seamen, and destined largely for British ports. The truth of this must be obvious, because it is well known that but one distinctively American steamship line is engaged in carrying the world's commerce between the United States and Europe, while a dozen such lines are operated by British, German, French and other European companies. With free access for British vessels to our great lakes, American shipping would be drowned in those waters; the low wages paid seamen by Great Britain would drive our seamen from our inland seas; the ship-building industries at Detroit, Cleveland and other great lake cities would be seriously crippled or destroyed. But more disastrous than all these, the agriculturist in the United States would be hopelessly impoverished. Our Canadian neighbours are able diplomats and keen business men; they know precisely what they want, and hope and believe they can induce us to bear the cost of satisfying their wants. Thus far their waterway conventions at Toronto, Cleveland and elsewhere have amply met their most sanguine wishes. But should we build that canal before the British possessions become part of our territory, we would perpetuate the monumental folly of all ages, a folly only exceeded by the Trojan's theft of the Grecian horse.

This opinion does not by any means stand alone in the United States. In the April number of the "Anglo-American," under the heading "From the Great Lakes to the Ocean," there was an article by a civil engineer, named Gilmore. After referring to the shortness of the route and the reduction in the rate which this Ottawa waterway will of necessity bring about, this gentleman goes on to say :

These figures proclaim the superiority of this over existing routes more forcibly than could the most impassioned appeal or the most flowery rhetoric. That terse maxim which the sporting man loves to enunciate: "Money talks," is the maxim of business. It has been ascertained that this canal is feasible and will save time. Time is money. Therefore, it will be built; of that there is no doubt. But upon what scale? Shall it be a 14-foot barge-way, a 20-foot ship canal, or a 30-foot waterway for the largest ocean steamer? The cost of this last will be very considerable, and beyond the means of Can-

ada alone at present. The first at least is certain of accomplishment. The advisability of a betwixt-and-between compromise is questionable.

I do not wish to weary the House at any great length with these citations. I have given a number of them because I think the language is much more terse than I could use, and because they express the opinion of men who are absolutely disinterested, and whose opinion should have great weight with us. I find another very strong evidence of the envy, and jealousy, and fear with which the Americans look upon the construction of this waterway. I am sure every hon. member read a suggestion made some time last November, while the International Commission was sitting in Washington, a suggestion which was made in a number of American newspapers, that, in addition to the questions then engaging the attention of the Commission, the question of an International canal was also deserving of their consideration. I have no doubt that the conception of an international canal by our friends to the south was prompted by the fear that this Georgian Bay route would be constructed. I have not the slightest doubt that they feel that, when this canal is constructed, the enormous traffic of the great lakes will be diverted, and brought down by the Ottawa route. It was because they felt they were likely to lose this traffic, that they suggested that a canal should be built by way of Lake Champlain to Montreal, the suggestion being accompanied by another suggestion, that this International canal should be under the joint jurisdiction of both Governments. Another evidence of the danger which the Americans see in the construction of the Georgian Bay Canal, is a suggestion made some time ago to construct a canal from Albany to Buffalo, in order to cover the whole distance by water from Duluth, or Chicago, through to the harbour of New York, and to avoid transhipments at Buffalo and Albany. I submit that every one who will look into this question without prejudice, who will examine it seriously, will be struck with the immense advantages, commercial and national, which it offers to Canada. I was glad indeed to hear the Prime Minister (Sir Wilfrid Laurier), at least on one occasion, express the opinion that this would be indeed a very great and potent factor in bringing through our country the great traffic of the west. The Minister of Public Works (Mr. Tarte), whose opinion my good friend from Pontiac (Mr. Poupart) quoted the other day, is also of the same opinion. I believe, the Minister of Railways and Canals (Mr. Blair), on some public occasion, not long ago, also expressed himself in the same way. The leader of the Opposition, and many gentlemen on the other side of the House, also entertain, I know, the belief that this route must, and will soon, be constructed. It seems that the greatest difficulty in the way of the Government at the present moment giving the guarantee which is

sought by the capitalists who are prepared to go into this matter, is a doubt whether this enterprise is feasible, and whether, when constructed, it will be of commercial value to those who will invest their money in it. With your permission, I shall briefly address myself to these two points, and endeavour to show that, not only is the canal feasible, not only is it practicable, but that every opinion which can be formed at the present moment is to the effect that this canal will be a paying venture to those who will invest their money in it.

With reference to the feasibility of the scheme, I want to remind you that, as far back as 1860, engineers, like Mr. Shanly and Mr. Clarke, were instructed by the Government to make surveys and to examine the country between Georgian Bay and Montreal. At that time, I believe, a complete survey was not made between Ottawa and Montreal, but a survey was made between Ottawa and the Georgian Bay, and it is embodied in the report made by these gentlemen. That report covers a great many pages. I think that every member in this House is confronted with the difficulty with which I was confronted myself, on account of the matter contained in that report being to a great extent technical. One who is not a professional engineer, is appalled by the figures which are there given. But I am satisfied that there is in that report all the data upon which an estimate may be made as to the cost of the work, and by which a conclusion may be arrived at as to the feasibility of the project. I shall not endeavour, of course, to criticise or go over the items of this report, but I invite the attention of every hon. gentleman who wishes thoroughly to inform himself upon the subject, to the reports of Mr. Shanly and Mr. Clarke. I desire, Sir, to put on "Hansard" the report of Mr. Marcus Smith made on the 30th December, 1898, because it is of very great importance and because, I believe, the report was procured largely to remove the doubt which existed in the minds of some as to the feasibility of the Georgian Bay Canal. In that report, which is addressed to Mr. McLeod Stewart, Mr. Marcus Smith, amongst other things, says :

Estimates have been made for the construction of this work on a scale of 10 feet depth of water on the mitre-sills of locks and 12 feet in canal, river and lake channels. But it is now required that the depth on mitre-sills of locks shall be 14 feet, and in canal, river and lake channels 15 to 16 feet, according as the bottom may be rock or earth.

The question has been raised whether there is a sufficient supply of water and depth in the channels of rivers and lakes to maintain these dimensions throughout the season of navigation?

From my knowledge and judgment I should answer in the affirmative, but for the information of yourself and others I submit the following :-

Then follows a great many figures and details mentioned by Mr. Smith with which I

will not trouble the House. He comes to this conclusion as to that part of it :

There is ample depth of water in Trout and Turtle lakes, so that when lowered to the adjusted level of Lake Nipissing there will be more than sufficient depth left for navigation on the scale required.

The excavation for the canal between Lakes Nipissing and Trout, and in deepening the river at the east end of Turtle Lake will be heavy ; the quantities can be calculated from the plans and profiles of the Government survey. Thus the great body of water in Lake Nipissing will occupy the unique position of the summit level of the whole scheme, so that its waters can be directed westward to Lake Huron or eastward, co-mingling with those of the Ottawa to Montreal.

On this arrangement Mr. T. C. Clarke remarks : "The waters of Lake Nipissing are sufficient for any scale of navigation for all time to come."

3. The Ottawa River has at any stage a sufficient body of water for the scale of navigation now proposed. The total fall between the mouth of the Mattawa River and Lake Deschenes is fully 300 feet, not uniform, but with stretches of still water, light currents and long rapids.

The banks of the river are generally high and mostly rocky. Taking advantage of this, Mr. T. C. Clarke has arranged the works in a series of high dams and locks to overcome the rapids, so that there are only two places (in the Culbute channel) where rock-cutting and dredging is necessary, except in short approaches to the locks. For the larger scale of navigation now required there will be more of that class of work, but the quantity will be moderate.

From the city of Ottawa to Grenville the latest information we have of the depth of water is from the report of Mr. (now Sir) Sandford Fleming, from soundings made under his directions in 1888. On the longitudinal section of the channel the least and greatest depth of water is given for each mile, reduced to a uniform datum, which conforms to the lowest level of the river, taken daily by the lock-master of the Rideau Canal during a period of seventeen years.

Mr. Fleming states : "There are only five points on the whole distance of 60 miles on which the depth of the channel on extreme low water is under 10 feet, \* \* \* and these shallow parts are limited in length to a few hundred yards each, the whole making an aggregate length of a mile. \* \* \* The material to be dredged is coarse red sand, and finer sand or silt in about equal proportions."

For the depth of water now required there will be, at extreme low water, according to Mr. Fleming's table of soundings, twelve points at which dredging will be required, varying from 1 to 9 feet in depth in short lengths. These may probably be reduced by the necessary enlargement of the locks and canal between Grenville and Carillon for the larger scale of navigation, if the dams are raised a few feet.

From Carillon to Lachine no dredging is shown for a 12 feet depth of channel, but for a 16 feet channel there may be some dredging. This can be ascertained from the charts and soundings of the Ottawa River in the Department of Public Works.

Now, as will be seen by the report which I have just read, which was made as recently as December, 1898, Mr. Marcus Smith, upon his own information, upon the evidence of Mr. Clarke and upon information supplied to him by Sir Sandford Fleming, whom

he quotes, says clearly that, not only is the scheme feasible, not only can a uniform depth of fourteen feet be obtained, but that the work is comparatively easy and will not cost a very large sum of money. When the matter was up before the other branch of this Parliament certain gentlemen were examined on this and other points, and considerable information was then obtained. I would invite the attention and the serious attention of the House to the evidence which was laid before the committee of the Senate in 1898. Mr. Marcus Smith, whose report I have just quoted, who was examined at that time, made this further statement :

I am acquainted with this from the very commencement of the surveys in 1858 and 1860. Mr. Walter Shanly, the engineer, commenced the surveys of this work in 1858, and they were completed by Mr. T. C. Clarke in 1860. I know both these gentlemen very well, and I know many of the assistants, as they have been working with me on other work ; and I have seen most of the plans, soundings, profiles and so on deposited in the Government office, and they are very complete. They are quite enough to make an estimate both as to the practicability of the work and the cost of construction.

Mr. Smith says the work is feasible, that the plans, sounding and profiles are quite sufficient to warrant him in coming to a definite conclusion as to the practicability of the work and in forming an estimate as to the cost of construction. Mr. T. C. Clarke, M. Inst. C.E., in his report to the Government of Canada, in 1860, says :

In the first place I have to report that the distance between Montreal and the mouth of the French River on Lake Huron (according to the plans furnished me by the department), is, following the line of navigation adopted, 430·76 miles.

That of this distance 351·81 miles are already a perfectly natural navigation, and require no improvement, and that it is perfectly practicable so to improve the remaining 78·95 miles as to convert the whole chain of waters into a first-class navigation for steam vessels, and to reduce the length of canalling to 29·32 miles, or, exclusive of the Lachine Canal, to 20·82 miles.

In a later report, he says :

To improve the navigation of such a river system is comparatively easy, for the greater part is already accomplished.

Then Mr. Wellington, the American engineer, whose opinion I have already quoted, in another part of my remarks, at one time expressed himself as follows :—

The finest place on the globe for a deep-water canal is the Ottawa River route.

Mr. Wicksteed, who was examined also before the committee of the Senate, said :

As to the feasibility of the undertaking, I think there is no question whatever. I was over the greater part of it last winter with Mr. Stewart.

I also desire to call your attention to the evidence given by Mr. Wicksteed before the Senate committee on the same point. I sub-

mit with confidence that the evidence I have cited to the House must be looked upon as conclusive, and, it seems to me, that, on that evidence, the Government is absolutely warranted in granting the guarantee which is now asked by the promoters. We have full and complete returns from actual surveys by Canada's best qualified engineers. There are plans, profiles and maps of the whole undertaking, from the Georgian Bay to the city of Montreal, and the opinions of the Canadian engineers are corroborated by the opinions of eminent American and British engineers. We have full details as to the quality, quantity and nature of the work to be performed, and we have full statements as to the nature of the locks, the nature of the dams and their extent and size. We know exactly from the reports of the engineers, the amount and the character of the dredging and its cost. I submit, Sir, that the proper depth of this canal should be fourteen feet. I have cited to you the opinion given by one eminent engineer as to that, and I would also invite your attention to the opinion expressed in the "North American Review" of June last, by another American engineer :

The project for a canal by which lake steamers should be enabled to reach the Atlantic is no new thing, and for more than ten years it has been strongly advocated by those interested in the commerce of the lakes. A number of routes for such a waterway have been proposed, but as yet no survey of any one of them has been completed. Owing in great part to the efforts of the Deep Waterway Association, a body composed of men actively concerned in lake shipping, Congress in 1895 created a Deep Waterways Commission for the purpose of investigating the feasibility of building such a canal "as shall enable vessels engaged in ocean commerce to pass to and fro between the great lakes and the Atlantic Ocean." Early in the year following, the commission reported that such a canal should ultimately have a depth of 28 feet, and that the Government would be justified in undertaking the work. It further recommended that surveys be made for such a canal. Later in the same year Congress appropriated funds for the purpose, and the surveys are now being made. While the Deep Waterways Commission were engaged upon their labour, Congress authorized the Secretary of War to have made an examination and estimates of cost of a canal "of sufficient capacity to transport the tonnage of the lakes to the sea." Whatever the purpose of Congress may have been, the act was less particular in its terms than the one previously passed, and it allowed an investigation into the question of what depth of canal would be best in the light of all the interests involved. By direction of the Secretary of War a preliminary examination was made by Major Thomas W. Symons, of the Engineer Corps. After careful consideration of the subject, Major Symons reported that a ship canal capable of floating a large ocean steamer would not be of sufficient benefit to justify its construction; but that a canal of about 12 feet depth, designed to carry barges of about 1,500 tons burden, such as could safely be towed to any part of the great lake system, would meet the demands of commerce and should be built. Two propositions are thus before Congress: first, to construct a 28-foot waterway from the lakes to tide-water, at a total cost of more

than \$300,000,000, for the surveys of which the sum of \$150,000 already has been appropriated; and second, to build a similar canal of a depth of 12 feet at a cost of about \$50,000,000.

There is another question which I presume the Government is desirous of having light thrown upon, and that is as to the cost of the work. Estimates were made by Mr. Clarke and Mr. Shanly, in 1860, when they made their report to the Government. Of course these figures have had to be changed very considerably since, principally on account of the increased depth of water now necessary. At that time it was contemplated to make a 9-foot canal only, but now, in order to be in line with the St. Lawrence Canal system, we must have a depth of 14 feet. Mr. Clarke has carefully and in detail, last year, revised his estimates of 1860, and his revised estimate amounts to \$17,000,000. It is true that estimate does not agree with that of Mr. Walter Shanly, but Mr. Shanly's figures are explained in a satisfactory manner, an explanation which I could give the House if time permitted. The figures I propose to adhere to, however, are the figures given by Mr. Marcus Smith. He, last year, estimated the cost of this work, basing his estimate on the details, plans and profiles to which I have referred, at \$25,000,000, and the promoters of the undertaking have adopted these figures and are prepared to expend \$25,000,000 or \$30,000,000 in the construction of this canal. On this question of the cost, I would also refer hon. gentlemen to the evidence given before the Senate Committee, which evidence has been printed and which they can read for themselves. With reference to the other question, as to the commercial value of the enterprise to those who will invest their money in it, I confess it is a matter of great difficulty to me, because I have not the knowledge or the data at my hand upon which to form a conclusion, and even if I had, I would probably be much embarrassed. Further, I wish to remind the House, that the estimate of the revenue which may be and will be likely to be derived from the operation of this waterway, has been made by Mr. Clarke and other gentlemen who are in a position to judge. In their opinion there is no question whatever, that commercially speaking, the venture will be a paying one to those who will invest their capital in it. It seems to me that the opinion of such men as Sir William Van Horne and others, who might, perhaps, be prejudiced against a waterway of this kind, and whose opinion in its favour should, therefore, have the more weight; it seems to me that the opinion of these men should be of sufficient importance to justify the Government in accepting them as conclusive, without going further into the question. To my mind, the Government is not called upon in this case, to guarantee the commercial value of the enterprise to those who are going to invest their capital in it. It would occur to me that all the Government should ask is a rea-

sonable assurance from people who are in a position to know, that this waterway would be sufficiently paying to warrant the people who are investing their money in it to go to that expense. In England, whence most of the capital for this canal is to come, the opinion is very general that this will be a paying enterprise. I would like to remind hon. members that the old maxim "Fortuna juvat audaces" applies as much if not more to commercial matters than to any other human concern, and I might add that perhaps no race on earth has proven more clearly the truth of that maxim than has the English race. Here we have British capitalists who are bold enough to come into Canada and expend \$20,000,000 or \$25,000,000 in constructing this canal, and, Sir, the men who are willing to go into that undertaking will at once prove the truth of the maxim I have quoted, if any people in the world can.

What is it these capitalists ask? They come here and say: "We are going to build this canal with our own money; we are prepared to spend \$25,000,000 in doing so; we do not ask the Government to give us any guarantee at all for the present; the guarantee we ask shall not be operative until and unless this canal is wholly built and put into active operation." The guarantee they ask is  $2\frac{1}{2}$  per cent on \$20,000,000, only a portion of the interest on the bonds; and I repeat—because it seems to me a very important consideration—that they are prepared to go on at once and in three years construct, equip and put into operation this canal without one cent of public money from the treasury of Canada. It is only when the canal is built, and if built that they ask the Government to act upon the guarantee which they now seek.

I know, Mr. Speaker, a great deal of objection has been raised, and not improperly—on the contrary, with a great deal of justification—against the Government pledging the credit of the nation on behalf of enterprises of this sort, until they have some reasonable assurance of its feasibility and its paying nature. The case of the Chignecto Ship Railway was mentioned the other day by my hon. friend from Pontiac, who pointed out very properly that that case was entirely different from this. In that case the Government bound itself to pay the promoters of the railway a subsidy of \$170,000 a year for 20 years. The Government were bound to pay the subsidy provided the people went on with the work. It seems to me that this case is entirely different from that, not only in regard to its commercial aspect and the guarantee asked, but in regard to its prospects of success. Those who sat in the House at the time, remember how assiduously and how strongly certain members fought against the granting of the subsidy to the Chignecto Railway. It was asserted boldly in the House that it was a wild-cat scheme, a scheme condemned to be a fail-

ure; and yet the subsidy was granted. But this case is entirely different. We find gentlemen on both sides of the House supporting it; we find the press of Canada, the press of the United States and the press of Great Britain almost a unit in advocating this scheme as offering the greatest commercial advantages to Canada and as being a most potent factor in the development and enrichment of our country. In this case we have the strongest possible evidence, as to the feasibility of the scheme and as to its ultimate success, that could possibly be given. In the case of the Chignecto Railway that was all wanting.

Now, Mr. Speaker, it seems to me, for the reasons I have mentioned, that the feasibility and commercial value of this scheme are established, and any one who will with an unprejudiced mind seriously look into it will come to the conclusion that the time has come when the Georgian Bay Canal must be constructed.

Another objection—and I desire to elude none of them—which has been raised against the construction of this canal is that the Government itself should undertake this work—that it should be a Government work constructed and paid for by the Government with public funds. Well, that is a matter of opinion. I do not agree with those who think that the canal should be constructed by the Government; but in this case the question is not a material one, because hon. gentlemen will remember that the Act of incorporation of the Georgian Bay Canal Company provides in section 43 that Her Majesty may at any time take possession of and operate this waterway for the public benefit. I will cite the section:

Her Majesty, her heirs and successors, may at any time assume the possession and property of the said canals and works, and of all the rights and privileges and advantages of the company, all of which shall, after such assumption, be vested in Her Majesty, her heirs and successors, on giving to the company one week's notice thereof and paying to the company the value of the same, to be fixed by three arbitrators or the majority of them, one to be chosen by the Government, another by the company, and a third arbitrator by the two arbitrators; and the arbitrators may in such valuation take into account the expenditure of the company, its property, the business of the canals, and other works hereby authorized, and its past, present and prospective business, with interest from the time of the investment thereof.

So you will see that although this canal may be constructed with private funds, the Crown may at any time step in and resume possession of it.

Before I sit down, Mr. Speaker, I want to call your attention to the character of the men who have taken this matter up in England. I want to cite to you the names of the gentlemen who form part of the syndicate and who have deposited in the Bank of Commerce at Ottawa the sum required, being 10 per cent of the capital authorized of the Georgian Bay Canal Company. A

syndicate has been formed with a capital of £50,000, and £41,200 have been deposited by the Lloyd's Bank in London to the credit of this company in the Canadian Bank of Commerce at Ottawa. What better evidence of good faith, and of the determination of these men to go on and construct this work could be given? And when I mention the names of these men, I am sure that the House will be impressed with their solvency, their seriousness, and their ability to bring to successful completion a work of this kind. These are some of the gentlemen who form the syndicate: Right Hon. Sir Edward Thornton, late British Ambassador at Washington; Right Hon. Sir Henry Fowler, late Secretary of State for India; A. L. Jones, of the Elder-Dempster Co.; R. N. Perks, M.P. for Lincolnshire; Mr. MacIvor, M.P. for Liverpool, and one of the most influential members of the Cunard Steamship Co.; Mr. G. G. Blackwell, of Blackwell, Day & Co., of Liverpool; the Marquis of Tweedale; Sir Dixon Mackenzie; Lord Kelvin, of Glasgow; C. J. Sassoona, of the East India Co.; Sir Luther Vaughan, Mr. Francis Durant, Mr. Anderson, Lord Provost of Glasgow; J. T. Reid, Director of the Bank of Scotland; and others. The House, I am sure, will see at once that these men, having shown their faith in the undertaking by subscribing largely to the stock of this syndicate, are fully competent to procure the funds necessary to carry it to successful completion.

I have, Mr. Speaker, to the best of my ability, and as fully as my limited knowledge would permit, endeavoured to answer the objections which have been urged against this vast project, and to deal with the difficulties which it no doubt offers. The undertaking is too vast, too far-reaching, too important not to have aroused a great many objections, and much enmity and opposition. Not only have objections been raised against it, but that usually effective weapon, ridicule, has been brought into play in order to destroy it. But, Sir, the project, since its inception, has risen above party politics; it has survived opposition and enmity; it has stood the test of severe and close criticism, and to-day it stands forth as the great, national and truly imperial project that it is. I may not have answered successfully all the objections which may be entertained by the Government with reference to the guarantee that is asked; but I assure you that I have not tried to elude any of them; and if I have not succeeded in convincing you and my colleagues of the great commercial advantages which will flow to our country from the completion of this great waterway; if I have not succeeded in getting you, Sir, and my colleagues to share my firm belief in the necessity and ultimate success of the Georgian Bay water route, I trust that I may venture the hope and belief that I have, along with my friend Mr. Poupart, made out such a case that every member of this House will consider

it his bounden duty at least to look into the question, and give it his serious and unprejudiced attention. I think I have made out such a case that the Government of the day cannot afford not to give it their prompt and serious consideration, and I have every reason to hope and believe that they will do so. My hon. friend (Mr. Poupart) and myself do not expect anything else from the Government or from any member of this House. All we desire is that the matter should be looked into and investigated; and I make bold to say that every one who does so will be as thoroughly satisfied as we are that the time has come when the Georgian Bay Canal shall be constructed. I trust, therefore, Mr. Speaker, that the Government will delay no longer in granting to the gentlemen prepared to spend their own money in this undertaking, the guarantee which they ask, and in enabling us to take full advantage of the magnificent natural waterway which Providence has given us—a waterway which in a very short time will divert and put in our control the enormous traffic of the great lakes and of the interior of this continent; which will at the same time colonize, develop and enrich a large portion of Ontario and Quebec—a waterway which I am sure will make of the cities of Montreal and Quebec the true rivals of New York and Boston, and of the city of Ottawa, the worthy capital of this Dominion. The construction and thorough equipment of this waterway ought not, it seems to me, to be any longer a matter of doubt. Every one who has taken the trouble to look into it is and must be convinced that it must be constructed before long. I believe myself that the time has come for doing it. If we wish to divert the traffic which properly belongs to us, and which nature designed us to have, we must at once be up and doing. Our neighbours to the south, who realize the great benefits of this canal, with their well known prodigious energy and spirit of enterprise, will not neglect to take any and all steps, and will not shrink from the greatest of sacrifices, in order to retain within their own control the great traffic which I believe, if the Georgian Bay Canal is completed, will be surely wrested from them. Let the Georgian Bay Canal be speedily constructed, and the Ottawa and French rivers, which three centuries ago formed the route by which Christianity and civilization were carried into the interior of the country, will become the greatest channel of commerce and of national prosperity on the continent we inhabit.

I thank you, Mr. Speaker, and the hon. members of this House for having listened to me so patiently and for so long a time, particularly on an evening so trying as this. Before I sit down, I again bespeak for this project the serious and earnest attention of the Government and of the members of this House.